

EXPECTED



Prelims Sure Shot Topics For IAS Prelims 2026

BASED ON **LAST 45 YEARS PYQs** & **LAST 1.5 YEARS CURRENT AFFAIRS**

ENVIRONMENT

Environment Prelims Sure Shot topics have been meticulously curated through a comprehensive analysis of UPSC Prelims Previous Year Questions spanning the last 45 years, integrated with the most relevant developments from the past 1.5 years of current affairs. It aims to provide aspirants with a list of expected topics which have a very high chance to be reflected in IAS Prelims 2026.

Developed under the academic guidance of **S.A. Majid Sir**, this resource reflects the rigorous research and collective expertise of the content team at RICE IAS.



S.A. MAJID

CO-FOUNDER & DIRECTOR RICE IAS
VICE PRESIDENT, ADAMAS UNIVERSITY



8100819447



riceias.com

EXPECTED PRELIMS TOPICS - 2026

BASED ON LAST 45 YEARS PYQs & LAST 1.5 YEARS CURRENT AFFAIRS

ENVIRONMENT

CHAPTER	EXPECTED THEME	SURE SHOT TOPICS FOR PRELIMS - 2026	JUSTIFICATION
1. ECOLOGY AND ECOSYSTEM	Biome- Biosphere- Ecosystem- Ecotone & Biodiversity Hotspot	Ecosystem	CDS (2017), CSE (2015), CAPF (2011)
		Nutrient cycle (nitrogen, sulphur, phosphorus)	CSE (2019, 2021)
		Various types of phytoplankton	NDA (2018)
		Various types of zooplankton	CSE (2021)
		Coral reef	CSE (2022), IES (2019)
		Microatolls	Recent studies use Microatolls in the Lakshadweep and Maldives archipelagoes to prove that sea-level rise in the central Indian Ocean began in the late 1950s. (The Hindu)
		Wetland and Mangrove (Role in Ecosystem)	CSE (2019), CSE (2014), EPFO (2020), CSE (2022)
		Eco-Ridge	Down to Earth (Term-based question can be asked)
		Western ghat and its protection (Eco sensitive Zone)	Madhav Gadgil Committee + CSE (2016)
		Bioremediation	CAPF (2018), CSE (2017)
2. CLIMATE CHANGE	Impact of Climate Change	Phytoremediation	Discussed in Down to earth Magazine (Term based question can be asked- like Blue Carbon -2021)
		Lichen and Mosses	CSE (2014) + CSE (2021) + discovery of several new species in the Western Ghats
		Green credit programme	New methodology launched for calculating green credit. Therefore, this becomes important for UPSC this year. (Remember, UPSC has asked a question on the Green Climate Fund in 2015)
		Montreal protocol	37th meeting of parties to the Montreal protocol concluded in Nairobi, Kenya. (The Hindu) + previously, UPSC has asked question on various protocol like

			Cartagena Protocol, Nagoya Protocol in 2016
		Methane emission	methane concentration has more than doubled (Nature Journal) + Previously UPSC has asked question on Methane Hydrate in 2019
		Glacier preservation (Very Important)	Nepal's Yala Glacier declared dead, having shrunk by 66% since 1970 (Previously UPSC has asked question on Siachen Glacier in 2020)
		Arctic amplification	unusually high air temperature and rainfall in Svalbard caused extensive snowmelt attributed to Arctic amplification (The Hindu)
		Coral bleaching	Australia experienced a record coral bleaching event (Reported by Down to Earth)
Climate Change Conventions & International Initiatives Technologies		UNFCCC COP30	COP30 of the UNFCCC was held in Belém, Brazil. (Previously UPSC has asked question on UNFCCC in 2016)
		National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) Implementation Alliance	Launched by UNDP, Italy, Germany, NAP Global Network (Indian Express) + In 2017 UPSC has asked question on Global Climate Change Alliance
		Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF)	Endorsed by: Brazil, Indonesia, DRC, China (India is an observer) + in 2015 UPSC has asked a question on a similar topic - Forest carbon Partnership Facility
		Resilient Agriculture Investment for Net-Zero Land Degradation (RAIZ) ACCELERATOR	Launched by Brazil and 10 other nations (The Hindu)
		Baku to Belém Roadmap to \$1.3 Trillion	To mobilize the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) of \$1.3 trillion per year by 2035 (Indian express)
		Maitri II	Finance ministry approved Maitri II in eastern Antarctica (The Hindu + Indian Express)
		Belem health action plan	First international climate adaptation plan focused on health (Indian Express)
		Belem gender action plan	Adopted by cop 30 parties. (The Hindu)
		Systematic observation impact bond	World's first impact bond focused on weather and climate data (The Hindu)

	Food waste breakthrough programme	Recent initiative by UN. This type of new initiative asked by UPSC (Example- R2 code of Practices asked in 2021)
	Super Pollutant Country Action Accelerator	Important because it is launched by CCAC. (Indian Express)
	Regional Platforms for Climate and Nature Finance	Announced by India and 12 other developing countries. (The Hindu)
	Blue Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Challenge	Six countries joined the Blue NDC Challenge at UNFCCC COP30. + Previously UPSC has asked question on Nationally Determined Contribution in 2016
	Green Hydrogen Certification Scheme of India	MNRE launched GHCI under the National Green Hydrogen Mission+ UPSC has asked a question on Green Hydrogen in 2023.
	E-Methanol Plant	World's first commercial-scale e-methanol plant inaugurated in Kasso, DENMARK (DD NEWS)
	National Designated Authority (NDA) For Carbon Markets	MoEFCC constituted a 21-member NDA (Indian Express) + UPSC has asked question on Carbon markets in 2023
	Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles (HFCVs)	Indian Oil Corporation signed MoU with Hyundai for mass-market adoption OF HFCV + Previously UPSC has asked question on Fuel cell in 2024.
	Green India Mission (GIM)	MoEFCC released revised GIM plan till 2030 (The Hindu)
	Weather derivative market	National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) and IMD established the foundation for India's first weather derivatives market (The Hindu)
	Greenhouse gas emission intensity target rules	Govt notified first GEI Target Rules 2025. + Previously UPSC has asked question on Greenhouse Protocol in 2016
	net zero framework for global shipping	IMO approved the net zero framework for global shipping (Indian Express)
	UAE Consensus	First-ever global stocktake under the Paris Agreement (Indian Express)
	International solar alliance	The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is in the news for celebrating its 10th Foundation Day in New Delhi (PIB) + UPSC CSE (2016)
	Climate tipping point (question can be terminology based)	Warm-water coral reefs have crossed their thermal tipping point, causing irreversible dieback. (Nature Journal)

		Champion of Earth Award	Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu's Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests, won the 2025 Champions of the Earth Award. (PIB)
		Global environment outlook report	UNEP released the GEO report in December 2025 (The Hindu)
		CCUS Technology	India launched multiple initiatives to reach net-zero emissions by 2070 with a focus on CCUS technology + CSE (2023)
		Bio-bitumen technology	CSIR has officially transferred its indigenously developed bio-bitumen technology for large-scale industry adoption
		Waste to energy technologies (Pyrolysis, Gasification)	CSE (2019) CSE (2024)
3. POLLUTION	Pollutant	Microplastic and Nano plastic	studies show a link between microplastics and the severity of cardiovascular diseases (The Hindu) + CSE (2019)
		Urban air pollution	IQ Air World Quality Report 2024-25 UPSC has asked question on WHO Air Quality Guidelines in 2022
		Aerosols	a landmark study published in Nature: Scientific Reports have linked the decline in sunshine hours to increased aerosol emissions (The Hindu)
		Per and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)	UPSC Frequently Tests This Type of Topic (2024) + Researchers have identified nearly 20 bacterial species capable of degrading PFAS (Indian Express)
		Asbestos	Ban on the use of asbestos in the construction or refurbishment of Kendriya Vidyalayas (Indian Express)
		Black Plastic	Black plastic is in the news due to recent reports highlighting that it often contains toxic flame retardants from recycled electronic waste that can leach into food. UPSC has asked question on polyethylene terephthalate in 2022 and plastic in chewing gums in 2024
	Convention and Initiative	Basel, Rotterdam And Stockholm Conventions	The 17th Meeting of Basel was recently held (Indian Express)
		Minamata convention	COP 6 to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (Indian Express)
		Global plastic pollution treaty	Negotiations are ongoing (Indian Express)

		Dumpsite Remediation Accelerator Programme	Housing and urban affairs ministry launched this initiative (PIB)
		Environment Flow	Union Jal Shakti Minister reviewed E-flow of the Ganga and its tributaries (PIB)
		CAFE Norms.	CAFE Norms are in the news because the Indian government is finalizing the third phase (CAFE-III), set to begin in April 2027 (THE HINDU)
	Technologies	Flue gas desulphurisation & flue gas (Very Important)	An expert panel led by the Principal Scientific Adviser has proposed revising the mandatory FGD rule for all coal power plants (The Hindu)
		green fireworks	The Supreme Court recently allowed the sale and use of CSIR-NEERI certified green crackers in Delhi-NCR for five days during Diwali on a trial basis, (The Hindu)
		Black Mass Recovery Technology	The Technology Development Board (TDB) is providing financial support to MiniMines Cleantech Solutions to commercialize a "Hybrid Hydrometallurgy" process that recovers 99% of battery-grade lithium, cobalt, and nickel from black mass (The Hindu)
		Water remediation technique (Phytoextraction, Phytostimulation, Mycofiltration)	ICAR recently published updated guidelines on using Phytoextraction, Phytostimulation, and Mycofiltration as cost-effective, nature-based solutions for cleaning heavy metals and microplastics from rural water bodies. (PIB)
		Smog Eating technology	The Delhi Government and IIT Madras signed an MoU on March 13, 2026, to launch a pilot study on photocatalytic coatings—a "smog-eating" technology (The Hindu, PIB)
		Cloud Seeding	IIT Kanpur and the Delhi Government are conducting cloud seeding trials to combat persistent smog, (Business Standard) +CSE (2019)
		Phthalates	FSSAI recently launched a nationwide surveillance study to detect phthalates (Down To Earth, March 2026)
4. BIODIVERSITY		Spices	Asiatic Lion
	Royal Bengal Tiger		Royal Bengal tiger- India's Wildlife Conservation Milestones; Policies,

			Achievements and Global Commitments (PIB).
		Penguin	IUCN and British Antarctic Survey recently raised alarms regarding the Emperor Penguin, reporting that 40% of their colonies in West Antarctica are currently facing "total breeding failure" due to record-low sea ice levels. (Indian Express)
		Pangolin	The Nandankanan Zoological Park (Odisha) reported the successful breeding and soft-release of a captive-reared Indian Pangolin into the wild, a first for the species in India. (PIB)
		Caracals	The Caracal is currently teetering on the edge of extinction in India, with fewer than 50 individuals estimated to remain in the wild as of April 2026. (Times of India)
		Jellyfish	In March 2026, massive blooms of Nomura's Jellyfish were reported in the Sea of Japan, disrupting local fishing by clogging nets. (The Hindu)
		Marsupial	CSE (2023) + Impacted by climate change impact (Nature Journal)
		Whales	The Rice's Whale in the Gulf of Mexico is facing an extinction crisis with fewer than 50 individuals remaining. (National Geography)
		Dugong	India's first dugong conservation reserve in Palk Bay (THE HINDU) +CSE (2015)
		Civet cat	The Malabar Civet remains a primary focus of the Zoological Survey of India as researchers intensify camera-trapping efforts in the Western Ghats (The Hindu) + CSE (2023)
		Great Indian Bustard	The Supreme Court of India in March 2026 expanded the mandate of its specialized committee to oversee the installation of bird diverters aiming to protect the remaining population of fewer than 150 Great Indian Bustards from collision-related mortality.
		Turtle	Turtle trail initiative launched in budget + CSE (2019)
		Olive Ridley Turtle	Operation Olivia launched by Indian coast guard (PIB)
		Sloth Bear	Recently added in species recovery programme of CSS-IDWH

	Gharial	Recently added in species recovery programme of CSS-IDWH + CSE (2019)
	Cheetah	8 Cheetah from Botswana + CSE (2024)
	Elephant	Synchronous all India population estimation of elephant 2021-25 conducted by wildlife institute of India + CSE (2020)
	Crocodile	India celebrated 50 years of crocodile conservation project on world crocodile day, June 17 (The Hindu)
	Dolphins (Ganga, Indus, Irrawaddy)	WII and MOEFCC Released Population Status of River Dolphin in India 2024 (Indian Express)
	Vulture	WII release 1st pan India assessment and monitoring of vulture
	Camel	Draft Policy Paper on Camel by Ministry of Fisheries + UPSC previously asked question on Kharai Camel in 2016 + Double-Humped Question in 2019
	Greater One Horned Rhino	DNA analysis of 2,573 rhino horn samples from kaziranga national park + CSE (2019)
	Rhesus Monkey	Indian Express explained (Nov 18, 2025)
	Moringa	The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare in March 2026 highlighted Moringa as a central crop for India's "Climate-Resilient Agriculture" initiative (PIB) + CSE (2021)
	Teak	MoEFCC in March 2026 announced a new subsidy program for Teak plantations in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra (PIB)
	Ebony Tree	Ebony remains a high-priority species for the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) due to increased surveillance against the illegal felling and smuggling (The Hindu)
	Red Sanders	Red Sanders remains a critical conservation focus, as authorities in Andhra Pradesh report a surge in seizures, including a major bust in the Seshachalam Hills involving over 280 kg of the endangered "Red Gold" wood smuggled from the Eastern Ghats. (The Hindu)
Protected Area	Tsarap Chu Conservation Reserve	Himachal Pradesh Recently Notified (The Hindu)
	Six New Sites Join FAO GIAHS	Six new sites have joined FAO GIAHS (The Hindu)
	Cold Desert Biosphere Reserve	Recently, UNESCO added it to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (The Hindu)
	Patna Bird Sanctuary	Recently added Ramsar site in 2026

	Chhari Dhand Wetland Reserve	Recently added Ramsar site in 2026
	Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary	Recently, added Ramsar site in 2025
	Therthangai Bird Sanctuary	
	Kechepalri Wetland	
	Udhwa Lake Bird	
	Menar Wetland Complex	
	Khichan Wetland	
	Gokul Jalashay	
	Udaipur Jheel	
	Gogabeel Lake	
	Siliserh Lake	
	Kopra Reservoir	
	Hesaraghatta Grassland	
	Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve	Released its first grassland bird survey report
	Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary (Deccan Traps)	In September 2025, India added seven distinct natural sites to the UNESCO Tentative List of World Heritage Sites, bringing the total to 69
	St Mary Island Cluster	
	Meghalayan Age Caves	
	Naga Hill Ophiolite - Nagaland	
	Erra Matti Dibbalu - Ap	
	Natural Heritage of Tirumala Hills- AP	
	Varkala Cliffs	
	Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary	The Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary in Kerala was officially renamed the Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary in January 2026, making it the state's first dedicated butterfly sanctuary
	Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park	Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park now hosts India First Biobank.
	Ratnanmahal Wildlife Sanctuary	Tiger sighting in Gujarat after 33 years (The Hindu)
	Dibru-Saikhowa National Park	Repeatedly mentioned in Down to Earth Magazine
	Arvali Green Wall Project	MoEFCC has completed native seeding—using Babool and Kair—across over 50% of the 5-km buffer zone spanning Haryana,

			Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi to stall the eastward expansion of the Thar Desert. (PIB)
	Convention and Organisation	IUCN World Conservation Congress	IUCN world conservation congress 2025 happened in Abu Dhabi, UAE + UPSC has asked question on IUCN in 2015, 2023
		UN Forum on Forests	India participated in UNFF-20 held in New York (Indian Express)
		United Nations Ocean Conference	3rd UNOC hosted in Nice, France
		Cites	50 Years of CITES + UPSC has asked question on CITES in 2015
		National Board of Wildlife	Recently a historic meeting held at Gir National Park, marking the first time a Prime Minister has personally chaired the full-body meeting in over a decade.
		UN High Seas Treaty	The UN High Seas Treaty (BBNJ Agreement) officially entered into force on January 17, 2026, establishing a legally binding framework to protect 30% of the world's oceans by 2030
		Global Geoparks Network	In January 2026, geological experts and UNESCO officials finalized a roadmap for Kasauli to become India's first official Global Geopark (PIB)
		Revive Our Ocean Initiative	In 2021 UPSC has asked question on Global Ocean Commission, this year Revive Our Ocean Initiative is in news so question can be asked on this topic.
		Central Asian Mammals Initiative	Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) adopted its six-year work programme (2026-2032) at the 3rd Range States Meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
5. LEGISLATION AND POLICIES	Laws	EPR Framework for Non Ferrous Metals	MoEFCC notified the Hazardous and other wastes amendment rules, 2025 introducing EPR framework for aluminium, copper, zinc (The Hindu)
		New Rules for Contaminated Site Management	MoEFCC has notified the Environment Protection (management of contaminated sites) Rules, 2025 (THE HINDU)
		Biological Diversity (Access and Benefit Sharing) Regulation 2025	NBA Issued New Biodiversity Regulation, 2025 (The Hindu)
		WPA 1972	Kerala Became the First State to Introduce Amendments to the WPA, 1972 +CSE (2017,2020)

	Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Amendment Rules, 2025	MoEFCC Recently Notified (PIB)
	Environment Impact Assessment	In March 2026, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issued a significant draft amendment to the EIA Notification 2006 (Down to Earth)
	Forest Conservation Amendment Act, 2023	The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act (FCAA), 2023, remains under intense judicial and ecological scrutiny as the Supreme Court continues to hear petitions challenging its narrowing of the definition of "forest." (The Hindu)
	Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rule 2025	The Environment Protection (Management of Contaminated Sites) Rules, 2025, notified by the MoEFCC on July 24, 2025, represent India's first comprehensive legal framework specifically dedicated to identifying and cleaning up "legacy pollution" sites (The Hindu)
	Biomedical Waste Management Rules, 2016	10 Years of these Rules.
Organisation	Ramsar Convention	COP 15 of the Ramsar Convention was held (The Hindu)
	Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA)	Repeatedly asked in PYQ (2022)
Policies and Initiatives	River Cities Alliance	NMCG approved the RCA Action Plan 2025 (PIB)
	CSS Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats Scheme	Gharial and sloth bear were recommended for inclusion under the species recovery programme of CSS-IDWH (PIB)
	International Big Cat Alliance (Very Important)	India and IBCA Signed an Agreement to Host the IBCA Headquarters and Secretariat (The Hindu)
	Environmental Accounting on Forest 2025	Report released by MoSPi (PIB)
	International Blue Flag Certification	Five Maharashtra beaches received certification (Indian Express)
	Rhodus India Programme	DNA analysis of 2,573 rhino horn samples from kaziranga national park (The Hindu)

		Rhisotope Project	Launched by the University of Witwatersrand with support from IAEA as an anti-poaching initiative (Indian Express)
		#23 For 23 INITIATIVE	Protection of snow leopard (The Hindu)
		Central Asian Mammals Initiative	CAMI countries reaffirmed conservation efforts
		Wetland City Accreditation	Indore and Udaipur became the first-ever Indian cities to receive this prestigious international recognition. (The Hindu)
6. UNCONVENTIONAL SOURCE OF ENERGY		India's First Bamboo-Based Ethanol Plant	Indias first bamboo-based ethanol plant at Numaligarh Refinery Limited (The Hindu)
		Ethanol Blending	India has achieved the 20% ethanol blending target in petrol (The Hindu)
		Green Ammonia	In January 2026, the foundation stone was laid for India's first and the world's largest integrated green ammonia facility in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh. (PIB) UPSC has asked 2 questions on Green Hydrogen in the year 2023.

We are conducting a Simulator Test based on these topics to help you practice for the IAS Prelims 2026.

To take the test, please enroll in the Simulator Test.



Key Features of the Simulator Test

- **5 Stress Management Sessions by Majid Sir** – Train your mind to stay calm, focused, and confident under real UPSC exam pressure.
- **Personal Mentoring After Each Test** – Get individual guidance to identify weak areas, improve decision-making, and avoid repeated mistakes.
- **Detailed Question Discussions** – In-depth analysis of each test to understand concepts, elimination techniques, and UPSC question patterns.
- **5 High-Impact Strategy Classes** – Learn proven techniques for attempt planning, intelligent guessing, CSAT handling, and time management.
- **Comprehensive Solutions & Study Material** – Concept clarity, important facts, and exam-focused insights for stronger preparation.
- **Performance Tracking & Ranking** – All India-level ranking, accuracy analysis, and continuous improvement tracking.
- **Real Exam-Like Environment** – Experience actual UPSC pressure, discipline, and exam conditions.
- **Latest UPSC Pattern Based Tests** – Questions designed as per current trends and unpredictability of UPSC.

- **Exact Exam Timing Simulation** – Practice at real exam timings (GS & CSAT) to align body and mind.
- **Offline Mode for Serious Preparation** – No distractions, ensuring complete focus like the real exam.
- **Time Management & Confidence Building** – Reduce panic, improve speed, and perform your best on exam day.

Tests Details:

SIMULATOR TEST DATE	DAY	9:30 A.M- 11:30 A.M	2:30 P.M- 4:30 PM
11 th April 2026	Saturday	General Studies	CSAT
19 th April 2026	Sunday	General Studies	CSAT
26 th April 2026	Sunday	General Studies	CSAT
3 rd May 2026	Sunday	General Studies	CSAT
10 th May 2026	Sunday	General Studies	CSAT

Attempt the Prelims Exam 10 TIMES before the actual day.
